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SUBJECT: BUDAPEST FY 2009 REGIONAL ESTH HUB WORK PLAN

REF: STATE 97800

Summary

11. (U) In FY09, the Budapest Environment, Science, Technology and Health (ESTH) Hub will build on its ongoing efforts promoting and leveraging U.S. engagement on ESTH issues to strengthen regional cooperation in the Balkans, Central and Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. To this end, we will seek out opportunities in various multilateral fora to promote U.S. positions on issues such as climate change and clean energy, transboundary water, environmental law enforcement, integrated coastal and marine management, eco-tourism, environmental security, and drug resistant tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. We will follow-up on pledges for the uptake of renewable energy made by governments and non-government actors in the region at the Washington International Renewable Energy Conference(WIREC). We will also seek to enhance scientific cooperation through conclusion of pending bilateral science and technology (S&T) agreements and continue outreach activities promoting healthy lifestyles, phasing out the use of leaded fuels in the countries where it still is used, and breast cancer awareness. We will build on the contacts established and activities pursued in FY08 involving the UNECE, the OSCE, the Organization of Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), and the network of Regional Environmental Centers (RECs) to promote U.S. ESTH engagement throughout the region. Similarly, we will offer support to the bilateral ESTH work of posts in the Budapest Hub's 20-country area of responsibility. As was the case last year, travel plans laid out in this work plan are preliminary estimates and subject to optimal scheduling for posts and the Hub alike.

12. (U) Note: An important planning issue is the expected changeover of Hub Officers in summer 2009. The current Hub Officer plans to depart post PCS on May 18, 2009, for training related to her ongoing linked assignments to a PRT in Al Hillah, Iraq, and subsequently to Vancouver. The previous Hub Officer, who has been on a 12-month TDY at Embassy Baghdad, will return to Budapest at approximately the same time although the exact date remains TBD. End note.

End Summary.

(a) Goals and Objectives:

13. (U) Environment:

Climate Change and Clean Energy:

Building on the outcomes of the Major Economies process, looking forward to December's UNFCCC's COP-14 in Poznan, and following up on pledges made at WIREC last spring, the Hub will support broader efforts to promote U.S.

climate change and clean energy policy broadly, and regional initiatives more specifically. To this end we will seek ways (and resources) to bring in U.S. expert speakers and -- working with Commercial officers at posts -- attract U.S. clean energy companies to the region, building on examples such as the September 2007 U.S. alternative energy trade mission to Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The Hub will also seek to facilitate technical cooperation between the U.S. and the countries of South Eastern Europe (SEE) on climate change science, including cooperation with the "Sub-regional Virtual Climate Change Related Center" in Belgrade. The Hub will also work with the Department and posts in the region to follow-up on pledges for the uptake of renewable energy made at WIREC by governments and stakeholders from Central and Eastern Europe.

In Hungary, the Hub will seek to cooerate with the Regional Environmental Center (REC) for Central and Eastern Europe (which also serves as the Regional Secretariat for the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP)) and other players to promote cost-effective, more efficient, technological solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance energy security in the region. We will also continue to support the Ambassador's environmental outreach program with its strong emphasis on promoting U.S. positions on climate change, clean energy, and energy security. To this end, as was the case in 2008, the Hub will rely heavily on the expertise and extensive contacts of our FSN Specialists to identify venues and activities, and do much of the preparatory work for

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events where the Ambassador can speak publicly on these issues.

Transboundary Water:

During FY08, the Budapest Hub continued it's efforts to foster positive USG relations with the Sava River Commission and the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR). In that context, the Hub has continued to facilitate U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) cooperation with the Sava commission and ICPDR. Discussions are ongoing and funding is still an issue, but we hope that this will bear fruit in FY09. The Hub will continue to offer assistance and advice in the dialogue between ICPDR, USACE and the Department on USACE's proposal to become an ICPDR observer. Thus enhancing opportunities and expanding avenues for U.S. technical cooperation on issues such as flood management and water quality.

In FY07, the Hub also became involved in efforts to resolve the transboundary water dispute between Ukraine and Romania stemming from Ukraine's dredging of the Bystroe Canal within the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve. The previous Budapest Hub Officer visited the Bystroe Canal in June 07 and utilized meetings in Kyiv to reinforce the USG position that Ukraine must abide by its international commitments under the Ramsar and Espoo Conventions with regard to this unique and sensitive area. The current Hub Officer followed up on this issue during her October 08 trip to Ukraine (septel). Looking ahead, in FY09 the Hub will continue to support USG efforts to help resolve this issue.

Environmental Law Enforcement:

In May 2007, the Hub -- in conjunction with the Budapest International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) -- hosted a Very successful one-week training course focused on combating Illegal logging. Prosecutors and foresters from Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Bulgaria and Hungary joined experts from USDOJ,

the U.S. Forest Service, and the World Bank to discuss strategies and programs for combating illegal logging. The course was an effective and cost-efficient way to strengthen environmental enforcement capacities in the region and enhance regional cooperation more broadly. There has been interest expressed in replicating this course in the region -- perhaps in the South Caucasus, the Black Sea region more broadly, or elsewhere. USDOJ, U.S. Forest Service, and World Bank trainers have expressed interest in doing so -- if funding can be identified. Unfortunately funding did not materialize in FY08. In FY09, the Hub will seek to work with these organizations, posts, and the Department to identify funding sources to support such an effort.

Integrated Coastal and Marine Management and Eco-Tourism:

In FY07, the Hub worked closely with EUR, OES and posts in the Black Sea region to organize the September U.S.-supported "Environmental Protection for Economic Growth" Symposium in Istanbul under the auspices of the Organization for Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC). The symposium was praised by BSEC member states, observers, and the BSEC Secretariat as an excellent model upon which to design future environmental activities in the region. With that in mind, in FY08 the Hub continued to engage with EUR, OES, and other relevant USG agencies to identify follow-on environment-focused activities involving BSEC countries. One possibility is a training on environmental enforcement as noted directly above, with possible foci on combating illegal logging, promoting sustainable forest management techniques, and preventing/mitigating wildfires. Another possible avenue of cooperation that has found initial resonance among Black Sea countries is promotion of eco-tourism. All BSEC countries have identified tourism as an important element in their overall development strategies. Some (such as Bulgaria) are experiencing rapid growth along coastal areas. Others (such as Albania and Azerbaijan) are impeded by widespread pollution problems stemming from decades-old communist-era legacies. All would benefit from U.S. expertise in sustainable tourism planning. Unfortunately funding did not materialize in FY08. In FY09 the Hub will continue to seek to support a sustainable tourism activity for the Black Sea region -- either via a regional training workshop to take place in the region, or one that would take environmental and tourism officials from BSEC countries to the U.S. to visit and learn from successful U.S. examples. As with other envisioned

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activities in the coming year, identification of USG funding sources will be critical.

Environmental Security:

In FY08, the Hub participated in meetings in Vienna on Environmental security under the ENVSEC Initiative - a joint enterprise of the OSCE, UNDP, UNEP, the Regional Environmental Center (REC) for Central and Eastern Europe, and NATO's Science for Peace program. The initiative seeks to utilize the complementary strengths of its constituent organizations to address environmental problems that either can be a source of political tension (either domestically or regionally) or serve as a mechanism for security-enhancing cooperation. The Hub sees value in this effort, and in FY09 will continue to seek to identify ENVSEC projects that could benefit from U.S. expertise. Possible areas to explore include OSCE's efforts to help Albania develop a solid waste management system for the northern city of Shkodra and OSCE's Moldova program to remove leaking stocks of Soviet-era pesticides that are contaminating groundwater in various parts of the country. The Hub's FSN Environmental Specialist has participated in

a previous Vienna ENVSEC meetings and we will look for opportunities in the coming year for her to build on this and stay engaged in the ENVSEC process.

Green Embassy Initiative:

The Hub was involved in setting up the Embassy's selective waste separation program at Embassy Budapest. This project was a joint collaboration between Embassy Budapest's DCM and the Hub's FSN Environmental Specialist who worked closely with all relevant Embassy sections to transform an innovative idea into concrete results which both reduce the environmental impacts of Embassy operations and provide an excellent example for Embassy efforts to raise environmental awareness in Hungary more broadly. The DCM and Hub FSN co-founded the Embassy's Green Embassy Committee, in which both Hub FSN and Hub Officer participate.

¶4. (U) Science and Technology:

Science and Technology Bilateral Agreements:

A number of countries in the Hub's region have recently signed, or are close to signing, new bilateral S&T Agreements with the United States. Hungarian authorities have previously indicated that in conjunction with the prospective signing of a new S&T bilateral agreement with the U.S., they would be interested in hosting a regional workshop involving other countries that - like Hungary - used to have a "Joint Fund" mechanism with the U.S. for science cooperation and now are adjusting to NSF's new international approach. Although as of the end of FY08, the bilateral S&T agreement with Hungary had not yet been signed, the Hungarians have recently indicated to us a willingness to move forward in the near term, and we are optimistic that the details could be finalized as soon as the first quarter of FY09. Assuming a new U.S.-Hungary Bilateral Science and Technology agreement is signed, and that the Hungarians do organize a regional workshop in conjunction with a signing ceremony, the Hub would seek to include representatives of relevant USG agencies (NSF, NIH, EPA, DOE), if funding for travel can be identified. In this and other Science issues, the Hub will rely heavily on the expertise and contacts of our FSN Science and Health Specialist.

¶5. (U) Health:

Disease Resistant Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS

Tuberculosis poses a growing health security threat in Europe and Central Asia. In 2005, there were 445,000 new cases of TB in the region. Continued poor adherence to accepted TB control practices has created high levels of multidrug-resistant (MDR) and extensively drug-resistant (XDR) strains of the disease. In Azerbaijan, approximately 18.8 per cent of the total number of TB cases are MDR/XDR TB. This is one of the highest rates of MDR/XDR TB in the world with other countries in the Hub's region having similarly high rates (Moldova - 18.9 per cent, Georgia - 19.5 per cent, Ukraine - 13.6 per cent). Globally, an estimated ten percent of TB patients are also co-infected with HIV, and TB is the leading cause of death for AIDS patients. Faced with this public health threat, on October 22, 2007, 53 member states of the World Health Organization (WHO) European Region signed the Berlin Declaration on Tuberculosis. The Declaration commits signatories, among other things, to

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strengthen political will, civil society involvement, and public health systems to combat the disease. During FY09, the Hub will look for ways to support and reinforce USG efforts (USAID, CDC, NIH, and the Department) to build

political will among the countries of the region to combat disease resistant tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. Our FSN Science and Health Specialist will be fully involved in planning Hub efforts on tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS.

Leaded Fuel Phase Out:

Since FY07, the Hub has supported efforts by the REC and EPA, in conjunction with the Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles (PCFV), to encourage the remaining countries of Europe (Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina) to commit to and/or implement phase out plans for leaded fuel use in those countries. In FY09, the Hub will continue to support these efforts to encourage and assist these remaining European countries towards lead fuel phase out.

Healthy Lifestyles Outreach:

In FY09, the Hub will continue to support Ambassadorial outreach activities in Hungary underlining the importance of healthy lifestyles and early screening in addressing preventable/treatable health problems such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, alcoholism, and breast cancer. This will include participation in such high profile events as the annual Bridge Walk for Breast Cancer Awareness as well as appropriate visits to hospitals, clinics, and community centers supporting healthy lifestyle programs in their areas. As has been the case in FY08, the Hub's two FSN Specialists will continue to play critical roles in supporting this ongoing and broad-based effort.

(b) Travel Plan:

16. (U) In FY09, the Hub Officer intends to visit Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Kosovo, Georgia, Macedonia, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Serbia, Turkey, and Ukraine to focus on issues noted earlier in the "Goals and Objectives" section of this document. It is also expected that there will be regional meetings scheduled by the REC, OSCE or other multilateral bodies in which the Hub Officer and/or Hub FSNs will participate. The Hub Officer has not yet had a chance to negotiate dates and details of the listed visits with posts, and the following schedule reflects her notional idea, if posts concur and funding is available. This travel schedule is based on the assumption that once we have a budget, Budapest's allocation will be sufficient to fully fund the Hub's traditional baseline travel budget of 48,000 USD. However, under the continuing resolution, based on actual FY08 funding levels for Budapest, the Hub has a working annual budget of 35,280 USD. We will adjust the travel plan as necessary to correspond to the actual FY09 allocation. Per para 5 of ref tel, the Hub Officer plans to travel to Washington in April 2009 for the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) and Fiftieth Anniversary Ministerial, and the envisioned two- to three-day Hub Officers meeting and associated consultations. If schedules align, and funding permits, the Hub would welcome participation of former Jeffersn Fellow Dr. Puru Jena, who worked with OES on organizing WIREC, and OES/STC staff as appropriate, in regional trips following up on WIREC pledges (Georgia, Poland, Romania, Slovenia). Again, given time constraints, Hub Officer has not yet had a chance to discuss specifics with Dr. Jena or STC.

As noted at the outset of this message, the current Hub Officer will be departing post PCS on May 18, 2009, and the previous Hub Officer will resume Hub duties around that time, although the exact date for his return remains TBD. Consequently, the proposed Hub travel schedule for the last quarter of the fiscal year is only an estimate at this time.

Notional Travel Plan would include:

October 6-10 2008:

Hub Officer travel to Ukraine to discuss broad range of ESTH issues including water, energy, and health (5 days; funded from FY08 Hub budget).

November 2008:

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November 5-8 BSEC Sci-Tech Committee Meeting in Borovets, Bulgaria (by air, 4 days, estimated cost: USD 2000);

November 20-21 (not confirmed; may be later in FY09) Hub Officer travel to Istanbul for meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Energy (by air; 3 days; estimated cost: USD 2200);

November 27-28 Hub Officer travel to Istanbul for meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Environmental Protection (by air; approximately 3 days allowing for travel time; estimated cost: USD 2200);

Hub Officer and Hub FSN travel to Vienna for initial calls on IO and NGO contacts to discuss broad range of ESTH issues (by train; 2 days; estimated cost: USD 1000).

December 2008:

Hub Officer travel to Czech Republic to discuss broad range of ESTH issues (by air; 3 days; estimated cost: USD 2300);

Hub Officer travel to Slovakia to discuss broad range of ESTH issues and call on UNDP Regional Center (by train; 3 days; estimated cost: USD 1250);

January 2009:

Hub Officer travel to Poland to follow-up on WIREC pledge and discuss broad range of ESTH issues (by air; 3 days; estimated cost: USD 2000);

Hub Officer travel to Slovenia to follow-up on WIREC pledge and discuss broad range of ESTH issues (by air; 3 days; estimated cost: USD 2100).

February 2009:

Hub Officer visit to Romania (3 days) and Moldova (2 days) to follow-up on WIREC pledges (Romania) and discuss a broad range of ESTH issues including transboundary environmental issues (Bystroë Canal, Rosa Montana and Tisza river issue, Black Sea/BSEC) and health issues (TB, HIV/AIDS)(by air; 5 days; estimated cost: Romania USD 2200; Moldova USD 1600).

March 2009:

Hub Officer travel to Albania (3 days) and Macedonia (2 days) to discuss a broad range of ESTH issues (by air; 5 days; estimated cost: Albania USD 2000; Macedonia USD 1900).

April 2009:

Hub Officer travel to Washington, D.C., to support the

Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) and Fiftieth Anniversary Ministerial (2 weeks), and associated Hub Officers' meeting (2 days) and consultations (3 days). Total time in D.C. - three weeks (by air; 21 days; estimated cost: USD 8000).

May 2009:

May 18 current Hub Officer departs post PCS;
(mid-May/date TBD) previous/next Hub Officer returns from Iraq and resumes Hub duties.

June 2009:

Possible consultations for returning Hub Officer in Washington, D.C., in conjunction with home leave (3 days; per diem only; estimated cost: USD 795);

Returning Hub Officer travel to Georgia to follow-up on WIREC pledge and discuss a broad range of ESTH issues including Transboundary environmental issues and health issues (TB, HIV/AIDS). (by air; 3 days; estimated cost: USD 3000).

July/August 2009:

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Possible FSI Training (2 days) and consultations (3 days) in Washington, D.C., for one Hub FSN (by air; 5 days; estimated cost: USD 3800);

Returning Hub Officer travel to Vienna and Slovakia for consultations with IO and NGO contacts and call on UNDP Regional Center (by train; 5 days; estimated cost: USD 2000);

Returning Hub Officer travel to Serbia (3 days) and Kosovo (2 days) to discuss a broad range of ESTH issues (by air; 5 days; estimated cost: Serbia USD 2200; Kosovo USD 1400).

September 2009:

Returning Hub Officer travel to Croatia (3 days) and Bulgaria (2 days) to discuss a broad range of ESTH issues (by air; 5 days; estimated cost: Croatia USD 1800; Bulgaria USD 1500).

Subtotal for planned travel: USD 47,245

Reserve for as yet unscheduled meetings and adjustments to travel plans when details are finalized: USD 755

Total: USD 48,000

(c) Timeline:

October 4-7, 2008: Visit of American Public Diplomacy Envoy Fran Drescher. She participated in the Breast Cancer Bridge Walk on October 5 and in related events.
Location: Budapest, Hungary.

October 6-10, 2008: Hub Officer in Ukraine
Location: Kyiv and Odessa, Ukraine.

November 3, 2008: Day of Hungarian Science
Location: Budapest, Hungary.

November 3, 2008: Tree planting with Ambassador, the Hungarian Forestry Service and the local community in the

city of Dregelypalank

Location: Dregelypalank, Hungary

November 5-8, 2008: Hub Officer attends BSEC S&T Working Group

Location: Borovets, Bulgaria

November 20-12, 2008 (to be confirmed): Hub Officer attends meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Energy

Location: Istanbul, Turkey

November 27-28, 2008: Hub Officer attends meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Environmental Protection

Location: Istanbul, Turkey

November 2008 (TBD): Hub Officer travel to Vienna

December 2008 (TBD): Hub Officer travel to Czech Republic and Slovakia

End of December 2008 (TBD): Christmas Party of the US-Hungary Joint Science and Technology Fund.

January 2009 (TBD): Hub Officer travel to Poland and Slovenia

February 2009 (TBD): Hub Officer travel to Romania and Moldova

March 2009 (TBD): Hub Officer travel to Albania and Macedonia

March 30-April 17, 2009: Hub Officer travel to Washington, D.C., to support the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) and Fiftieth Anniversary Ministerial (2 weeks), and associated Hub Officers' meeting (2 days) and consultations (3 days).

Location: Washington, D.C.

May 18, 2009: Departure of Hub Officer Camille Hill

Mid-May (TBD): Return of Hub Officer Sam Kotis

June 2009 (TBD): Hub Officer travel to Georgia; possible Washington, D.C., consultations for returning Hub Officer in conjunction with home leave.

July/August 2009 (TBD): Hub Officer travel to Vienna,

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Slovakia, Serbia, and Kosovo; possible Washington, D.C., training and consultations for Hub FSN.

September 2009 (TBD): Hub Officer Travel to Croatia and Bulgaria

October 2009 (TBD, probably in the first week): Budapest Breast Cancer Bridge Walk

Location: Budapest, Hungary.

November 5-7, 2009: World Science Forum

Location: Budapest, Hungary

(d) Regional Cooperation Projects:

Programs and Projects in which the Hub is involved include:

-- The Sava River Commission (transboundary water)

-- ICPDR (transboundary water)

-- BSEC (Black Sea environmental cooperation/coastal marine management and eco-tourism)

-- ENVSEC (environmental security initiative of the OSCE, UNEP, UNDP, UNECE, REC and NATO)

-- South East Europe Virtual Climate Change Related Center,

Belgrade (Climate Change)
-- Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP) (Climate Change and Clean Energy)
-- Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles (working to secure and/or implement commitments by Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina to phase out leaded fuel (Health))

(e) Foreign Assistance Process Participation:

As was the case in FY08, the Hub will encourage posts in our region that are eligible for Foreign Assistance to include priority ESTH issues in preparing their Mission Strategic Plans (MSPs) and Operating Plans (OPs). When additional guidance from the Department is available, the Hub Officer will utilize knowledge gained in FY08 regional visits to suggest areas where targeted bilateral assistance funds could be used to accomplish important economic development, democracy-building, health, and environmental objectives. For the most part, USAID missions in the region have not emphasized ESTH activities in recent years. Hub Officer will offer assistance, expertise, and encouragement to address this gap.

f) Outreach:

In FY08, the Hub continued to work with EUR, OES and Consulate Istanbul to help highlight our engagement on Black Sea environmental issues through the BSEC. On Climate Change and Clean Energy, the Hub has been the action office at Embassy Budapest for Ambassadorial speeches on the subject. On November 3, the Ambassador and Hub Staff also plan to participate in a tree planting that will be conducted with the Hungarian Forestry Service and the city of Dregelypalank. As noted previously, the Hub is the action office for the Ambassador's Healthy Lifestyles outreach program around Hungary, which in FY08 included Under Secretary Hughes' participation in the October 2007 Bridge Walk for Breast Cancer Awareness. U.S. Public Diplomacy Envoy Fran Drescher participated in the October 2008 Bridge Walk. Now that Embassy Budapest's "Green Embassy" initiative is in place, we will seek ways to utilize it for public diplomacy purposes. In general, however, the Hub's ability to execute an effective outreach effort on regional or sub-regional ESTH issues (for instance cooperation on the Sava River, Black Sea coastal issues, improving regional TB communication and response coordination; and regional climate change modeling) will be dependent on whether funding for actual U.S. support can be identified for us to highlight.

g) Training and Capacity Building:

Both Budapest Hub FSNs have now attended the annual FSI ESTH FSN Tradecraft course. Both Hub FSNs also attended the EUR ESTH Officers' Conference held in Budapest September 3-5, 2008. We are looking into the possibility of sending one of the ESTH FSNs to FSI for one of several 2-day ESTH-related courses and a few days of consultations in July 2008, and will also look for training and professional development opportunities for the FSNs which may be available in Europe.

h) Washington Hub Officers' Meeting and Consultations

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As noted above in the Travel Plan and Timeline Sections, Hub Officer will plan a spring visit to Washington to participate in the Hub Officer meeting and follow-on consultations in conjunction with the April Antarctic

Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) and Fiftieth Anniversary Ministerial.

i) Proposed DVC dates

A date from among the following possibilities would be convenient for the Hub: December 1-5, 2008 or January 5-9, 2009. We would prefer a time in the morning Washington time so that we can conclude the DVC before 5 pm Budapest time and avoid FSN overtime.

Foley